

ADVISING THE CUSTOMER

WORKSHOP GUIDE



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LEARNING OBJECTIVES

At the end of the session delegates should have a greater understanding of customer needs and the roles that they play in helping your organisation meet those needs.

Each delegate may be given a Personal Action Plan to record any learnings and personal development commitments that they make as a result of this training.

INTRODUCTION

This guide is designed for a manager or a facilitator to deliver a short workshop featuring videos from the Video Arts Customer Service Essentials Series. Each video comes with a series of activities around the following structure:

LOOK - watch the video and reflect on the content and message.

THINK - activities and questions linking the video to their own experience and workplace.

REMEMBER - a summary of the key learning points.

Each section relating to the video will last around 15 minutes.

PRACTISE - At the end of the series of videos there is a 30 minute practical training exercise which will bring the learnings together. Delegates should be encouraged to record any personal development actions on their Personal Action Plan sheet.

FEATURED VIDEOS

- Knowing your stuff (Why are you curled up in a ball?)
- Finding out what they want (It's not the age it's the mileage right?!)
- Getting into their head (He just wants the tie)
- Showing them the benefits (But is it comfy?)

VIDEO 1 - KNOWING YOUR STUFF

LOOK (play the video, 3 minutes)

In the setting of a shoe shop 'Bad Service' discovers that knowing your product and company policies are essential, before you even get face-to-face with customers.

THINK (10 minutes discussion)

What was the 'Bad Service's' biggest mistake?

Most of your team should realise it was about not having the product knowledge and assuming that this wouldn't matter, in addition 'Bad Service' didn't listen to what customers wanted.

Why is it important to understand the commercial, market outside your own products?

Good answers will demonstrate a knowledge of needing to appear professional, to be able to advise customers correctly, and to know what makes your own products different.

Were the customers being 'difficult'?

No. Customers will have a variety of needs; it's up to the Customer Adviser to know what they're likely to be asked.

REMEMBER – (2 minutes to reiterate key learnings)

Knowing your stuff gets the customer onside. You should have a detailed knowledge of what you've got – your product range and its features. You should also know your policies, as well as having a wider knowledge of the business and the market landscape.

- Know what you've got
- Know your policies
- Know the business

VIDEO 2 – FINDING OUT WHAT THEY WANT

LOOK (play video, 3 minutes)

The video is set within a cosmetic beauty clinic with a nervous customer who wants treatment but is not sure what.

THINK (10 minutes)

How does the 'Good Service' get the customer to open up?

Responses could include: using open questions, reassuring the customer, building trust and confidence.

What was the customer feeling when 'Good Service' went to get more information?

She was feeling reassured, more confident and open to discussion of what solutions may be available to her.

How did the customer feel after 'Bad Service' came in with assumptions?

Probably rather shocked, upset, and not in the right frame of mind to discuss beauty treatments.

REMEMBER (recap, 2 minutes)

Customers don't always know what they want. Whatever service you provide, encourage your customers to open up. Listen to their needs, desires and concerns.

- Customers don't always know what they want
- Encourage them to open up
- Listen to them

VIDEO 3 - GETTING INTO THEIR HEAD

LOOK (play, video 3 minutes)

We're in a department store and a customer comes in for a colourful tie. Our 'Good Service' recognises that the customer is trying to change their image not just buy a tie.

THINK (allow 10 minutes)

What makes us buy things? - is it really because we 'need' something?

We often choose brands and products based on how they make us feel, for example insurance from a trusted provider, clothing to fit our self image.

How do we feel after we have bought something that we really wanted?

A range of emotions may come up here, typical answers will include happy, pleased, relieved, or maybe even on a bit of a high.

REMEMBER (recap, 2 minutes)

The customer may need something more than what they're asking for. Try to get to the truth of the matter by asking questions.

- The customer may need something more...
- Something different to what they're asking for
- Try to get to the truth with questions

VIDEO 4 - SHOWING THEM THE BENEFITS

LOOK (play video, 3 minutes)

This video is set in an office furniture store, 'Bad Service' has memorised all the product features but has no idea how to relate them to a customer's needs until he is prompted by his colleague.

THINK (10 minutes)

Why didn't the customer seem impressed at the Customer Adviser's extensive product knowledge?

Jargon usually puts off customers, plus he hadn't tried to understand what was important to the customer before reeling off all the product features.

What is the difference between a feature and a customer benefit?

A feature is specific to the product; however a benefit adds value to the customer.

How can you understand what features are going to be most important to the customer?

This is best done through effective questioning, in most cases products and services are designed to meet specific customer needs however the importance and priority that customers place on features depends on a range of factors. You need to understand the most important in order to be able to relate the best product to their needs.

REMEMBER (recap, 2 minutes)

Features like 'it's got auto-tension' are factual statements but they won't entice customers to buy. A benefit (like 'it's incredibly comfortable') answers the question 'What's in it for me?' People buy benefits – so relate these to them.

- Features are factual statements
- Benefits are value statements

ADVISING THE CUSTOMER – PRACTISE

This is a simple and powerful activity that can help you show the value of your product/service to a customer by knowing your product, and using features and benefits to help a customer understand more about what they want. It should take around 30 minutes depending on the group.

Pick a participant to be the customer, and hold out two pens. Offer to sell them one for £100 and one for £1. Ask them which one he would like.

They are likely to pick the £1 pen

Then ask why they chose that particular object.

Most likely response is cost, but the reasoning doesn't matter.

Before you hand them the object, start to list some features and benefits, for example:

“The £100 pen is guaranteed for life. Even if you lose it, you can come back and get another one, saving you money in the long run. Is that of interest to you?”

Then ask again, which pen would you like?

Continue listing features until the customer would be crazy not to go for the more expensive pen, you can be as creative as you like with the features. Some examples could include:

If you show your pen at a cinema or nightclub, you will automatically go to the front of the queue

The £1 pen will run out of ink in a week

The £100 pen retains 75% of its value – so you can sell it to someone else later on for £75

And so on.....

The point is that, eventually, someone will pay £100 for a pen, proving that it is value, not price that drives decision-making.

Now split the group into pairs and ask them to repeat the exercise using either a company product or service, or any other objects chosen at random.

At the end of the exercise delegates should be more comfortable with relating features and benefits to potential customers, as well as being more confident in understanding that customers do not always immediately know what is important to them, sometimes they need to know what they are missing !

Invite each delegate to capture at least one thing that they will do differently in their workplace as a result of this exercise.